

Congressman Jim Kolbe

8th District Arizona

Newsletter

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LAND OF THE FREE, HOME OF THE BRAVE

Almost 230 years ago the Declaration of Independence was ratified by the Continental Congress on July 4th to avow that all men are endowed with the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. By declaring that government exists to protect these rights with the authority granted by the will of its citizens, the foundation of American democracy was born.

The United States is truly a diverse nation made up of people from all ethnic groups, cultures, religions, and walks of life. Every day, families from countries as far away as Kenya or Cambodia leave their homeland to come to the "land of the free and the home of the brave" so they can begin their American Dream and become part of a country that holds high the value of freedom and liberty.

On the Fourth of July, we celebrate the liberty secured by generations before us. When every neighborhood across our nation lights up with fireworks this Independence Day, we honor our country's most cherished values – freedom and independence.

It is with great pride that I serve the 8th Congressional District. I am committed to using my seniority and experience in Congress to defend our fundamental rights as Americans and enact laws that benefit the people of southeastern Arizona.

In the past months, Congress has worked to pass laws that protect our freedom and to allow all Americans an opportunity for a better life. We have shown our commitment to our troops by passing legislation to ensure they are protected and compensated and to ensure the success of their missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.



We have increased our national security by lessening our dependence on foreign energy, promoting conservation, and supporting alternative and renewable energy sources through a comprehensive energy bill. The burden on taxpayers has been relieved by phasing out the estate tax by 2010. And the cost of credit has been reduced for responsible, law-abiding individuals through a bankruptcy bill that cracks down on abuses of our existing financial system.

We are making strides on securing our homeland. The spending package that passed through one of my subcommittees has vastly reinforced our border security by increasing the number of Border Patrol agents and providing them with the technology and resources they need. Additionally, the immigration bill I introduced will provide a commonsense, *realistic* approach to secure our border and stop illegal immigration.

We live in pivotal times; to be an American in this day and age brings with it both privileges and responsibilities. It is a privilege to have the endless opportunities that are not available to hundreds of millions of people across the world. Our responsibility lies in helping those that are less fortunate through charity, commerce, and friendship, as our positive presence in the world inevitably conveys the democratic ideals that have made the United States so successful – spreading freedom and democracy across the world makes America inherently more secure and the world a more peaceful place.

As the Chairman of the subcommittee that oversees our foreign assistance budget, I realize the importance of leading by example and establishing goodwill between nations as the best way to spread democratic values and freedom to those who do not have it. On this Independence Day, let us not forget these values that help make our future so bright. The ideals enshrined in the Declaration of Independence are still present in every aspect of our lives. The American Revolution we started did not end on that day. We will persevere in our endeavor for the American Dream – continuing the ideals of the American Revolution that began almost 230 years ago.

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CASEWORK CORNER

♦ POST OFFICE CASE

The Problem: An elderly resident, unable to walk to the end of her driveway, tried to get the Post Office to deliver her mail to her front door without success. Without front door deliver, the woman was only able to get her mail if she had a visitor bring it to her.

Kolbe Office Solution: Contacted the Postal Service, and the Postal Carrier agreed to deliver her mail to the front door.



Jim welcomes President Bush to Tucson on March 21st to discuss strengthening Social Security.

♦ VETERANS DISABILITY CASE

The Problem: Veteran has pursued service-connected disability for years without success

Kolbe Office Solution: The case was shepherded through an appeals process, and the veteran was granted 100% disability and more than \$50,000 in back pay.

♦ GREEN CARD CASE

The Problem: A Sudanese “Lost Boy” did not think he could get his Green Card corrected in time to enlist in the Navy – his lifelong dream.

Kolbe Office Solution: Obtained the documentation needed so he could correct the Green Card in time. Student has recently met with Navy recruiters.

♦ VISA CASE

The Problem: A foreign educator needed for an area agency’s summer program for students with disabilities had her visa denied by the Embassy.

Kolbe Office Solution: Contacted the Embassy which allowed the educator another interview. The educator was granted a visa the same day and arrived in time to start teaching.

SERVICE ACADEMY NOMINATIONS

If you have ever dreamed of flying an F16, or commanding a submarine, or being a company commander of infantry, applying to a Service Academy is the best route to reach your goal. There are specific guidelines you must follow if you want to serve your country as an officer in the military, and our office can help.

Every member of Congress has the privilege of nominating a select few for admission to the United States service academies: United States Military Academy, West Point, N. Y.; United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md.; United States Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colorado and the United States Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, New York.

I have an Academy Advisory Committee comprised of active duty and retired military members as well as civilian members who review student files. Files must be

complete by November 10 of each year.

If the file meets the high standard required by an academy, the applicant will be offered an interview by the entire Academy Advisory Committee and myself. We then nominate qualified students for admission.

The student must also apply, on their own, to the various academies, usually during his or her junior year in high school. Students may also apply after high school and some as they are not over the age of 22. Files should be opened beginning in the spring and through October in the year prior to the year in which they desire to attend an academy. Applicants MUST be residents of the 8th Congressional District.

Attending a service academy opens the door to a first rate education and to a possible military career. Students considering pursuing this option should be committed to honor, duty, country, and the high ethics required from each academy.

For more information, visit <http://www.house.gov/kolbe/services.htm>



SECURE AMERICA ACT

Real Border Security & Immigration Reform

On May 12, 2005, I introduced the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act with Congressmen Flake and Gutierrez, with Senators John McCain and Ted Kennedy in the Senate. This legislation is an effective way to secure the border and deal with the many problems associated with illegal border crossings.

The Secure America Act is based on a simple premise – our immigration system is broken, so it is necessary to fix the whole thing. We must not address our immigration system with piecemeal solutions. By using this comprehensive approach, we tackle border security and immigration reform through three channels.

BORDER SECURITY

First, we need to improve border security. We have already increased the number of Border Patrol agents. And we have given them more tools to do their jobs effectively. We even have the military providing support along the border. But, this obviously isn't enough, and, by itself, isn't working. The Secure America Act does more by instructing the Department of Homeland Security to look at the most cost effective and efficient way to secure the border and to implement programs to improve security.

FRAUD

The second area of concern is fraud. We need to create a fool proof, easy to use, system for workers and businesses. Once this system is in place, we must enforce the law against U.S. businesses that don't comply and hire and abuse illegal workers. The Secure America Act establishes a system that uses fraud resistant documents so businesses and workers can have confidence that work permits are valid. A key component will be the creation of the Employment Verification System. This electronic program will utilize tamper-resistant, biometric, machine-readable identity documents, which will be verified when a temporary worker begins and finishes a job. This will make it easier for employers to know who is authorized to work in the U.S., and there will be no excuse for noncompliance.

TEMPORARY WORKERS

Third, we must create a realistic temporary worker program that allows businesses to hire someone from places like Mexico if there is no one in the U.S. willing

or available to fill the job. The Secure America Act creates two visa categories – one dealing with foreign workers wishing to come to the United States, and one dealing with workers already here illegally.

Under the first category, a foreign worker who is hired must pay a \$500 fee and must pass a security background check and medical tests. After the fee is paid and the tests are passed, the worker will receive a worker visa that may be used for any work in the United States. Instead of cutting fences, vandalizing property and straining law enforcement and health care capabilities, workers would be channeled through ports of entry where they can be documented, screened and monitored – giving the U.S. a better understanding of who is living within our borders. Not only will a temporary worker bill make it easier to focus law enforcement efforts to track and capture the criminal and terrorist population crossing the border, it will prevent the increasing number of deaths along the border. By enabling these individuals who are looking for legitimate work to enter in legal ways it will no longer be necessary for these people to risk their lives on a long trek across the desert.

The other visa – for workers currently in the U.S. illegally – is a vehicle by which the current illegal population can obtain temporary legal status. After paying a \$2,000 penalty fine and waiting a 6 year penalty period, visa holders must either leave the country or study English, take civics classes, and go to the back of the line if they want to apply for their Green Card.

ENFORCEMENT

The Secure America Act also ensures enforcement of the law. Provisions in this bill cover the costs of increased enforcement by collecting fines and back taxes from those who violate the law. The bill also doubles the fines for employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants.

This is a comprehensive solution. Plainly put – we need to fix our hemorrhaging immigration system with complete surgery. A simple band-aid – or piecemeal approach – won't work.

For more information on the Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act, visit:

<http://www.house.gov/kolbe/bordersecurity.shtm>

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Agriculture Appropriations

On June 8, the House passed a \$99.6 billion spending package for Department of Agriculture programs. The funding includes money for the Upper San Pedro Partnership Watershed Management and grants for Hispanic Serving Institutions, which includes Cochise College, Pima County Community College, and the UofA South.

Recognizing the Sacrifices Being Made by Families of Members of the Armed Forces and Supporting a Week as National Military Families Week

On June 8, the House passed a Resolution recognizing the sacrifices of military families and the support they provide for those serving as members of the Armed Forces. The Resolution also designates National Military Families Week.

Science, State, Justice, and Commerce Appropriations

On June 16, the House passed a \$57.45 billion spending measure that includes funding to improve our national security and investigate terrorism. Included in this bill is \$30 million for the Southwest Border Prosecutor Initiative – a program that provides assistance to state and local law enforcement in handling drug and alien cases referred from federal arrests in southwest border states.

SCAAP Amendment

Congressman Kolbe successfully attached an amendment to the Science, State, Justice, & Commerce

Appropriations bill that increases funding for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) by \$50 million. This amendment will give a total of \$12 million to Arizona to reimburse jails the costs of incarcerating illegal immigrants.

Department of Defense Appropriations

On June 20, the House passed the Fiscal Year 2006 Department of Defense Appropriations bill. The bill, which totals \$408 billion, includes funding for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. It also funds many programs that benefit southeastern Arizona.

Intelligence Authorization

On June 21, the House passed the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006. The legislation continues the commitment to the Global War on Terrorism and ensures that intelligence resources are directed in a balanced way toward threats to our national security. The bill increases the number of case officers and training and support infrastructure and establishes a long-

term counterterrorism program.

Labor, Health & Human Services Appropriations

On June 24, 2005, the House passed the Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill. The bill increases funding for the Department of Education by \$118 million, which includes the highest funding for Pell Grants in history. In addition, research funding at the National Institutes of Health is increased by \$145 million, and Community Health Centers receive an additional \$100 million.



KOLBE AIDE TO BE IN GREEN VALLEY, SAHUARITA

District Aide Bev Collier will be available to meet with Green Valley and Sahuarita residents on Friday, July 22, 2005 to discuss concerns about federal agencies such as the Social Security Administration, the Veterans Administration and the Internal Revenue Service.

Also available will be information regarding Presidential greetings and flag requests, as well as Congressional Tours of the White House, the U.S. Department of State, the Kennedy Center, the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the Washington National Cathedral and Mount Vernon.

Collier will be available to meet with residents from the Green Valley area from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Green Valley Community Coordinating Council office in the Green Valley Mall. She will also be available to meet with residents in the Sahuarita area from 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Sahuarita Town Hall. The GVCCC office is located in Suite 14B on the southwest side of the mall. The Sahuarita Town Hall is located at 725 West Via Rancho Sahuarita, just south of the Sahuarita Post Office.

Although appointments are not necessary, you may schedule an appointment by calling Collier directly at (520) 881-3588.

TAKING CARE OF OUR VETERANS

As one of the few Congressmen who served in a combat assignment, I have a strong personal interest in our armed forces. I have consistently advocated improvements in benefits for our active duty, Reserve and National Guard, retirees and veterans.

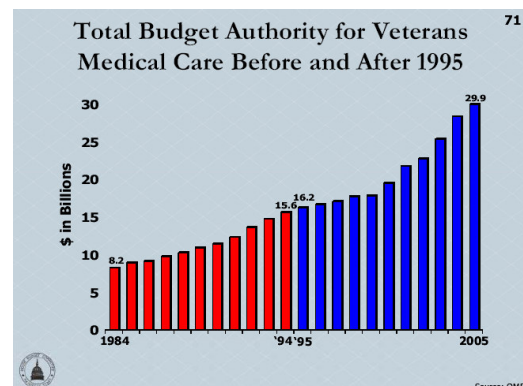
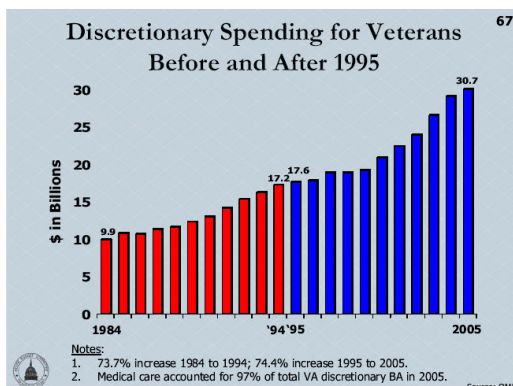
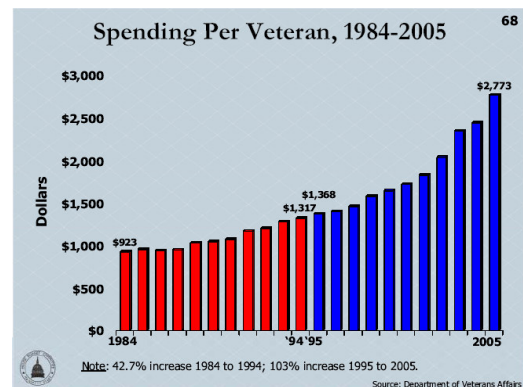
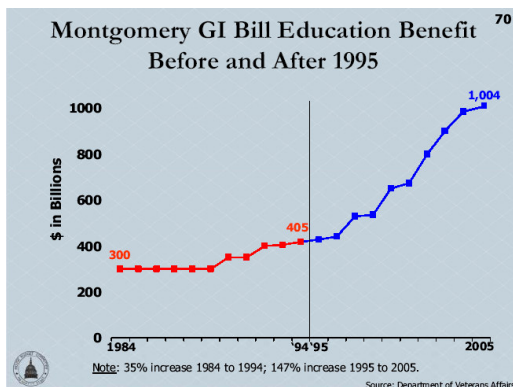
On May 26, 2005, the House of Representatives passed its version of the Department of Veterans Affairs appropriations bill for fiscal year 2006 (HR 2528). I was proud to vote in favor of this bill, which includes significant benefits for veterans. Some highlights of the bill are:

- **\$28.8 billion** total for VA health care, a \$632 million increase over last year;
- Does not include additional fees for veterans as proposed in Administration's budget request;
- **\$21 billion** for Veterans Medical Services, \$1.64 billion over last year;
- **\$36.8 billion** total discretionary spending for veterans benefits, a \$1.5 billion increase from last year; and
- **\$20 billion** for the Defense Health Program, an increase of \$1.8 billion from last year.

The increases in the bill continue a commitment to our nation's veterans reflected in increased funding for veterans programs. Since 1995, when Republicans became the majority in Congress:

- Total budget authority for veterans programs **increased 77%**;
- Spending for veterans medical care **increased 84.6%**;
- The number of veterans receiving care grew from 2.5 million to 4.7 million – an 88% increase;
- Monthly Montgomery GI Bill benefit **increased 147%**; and
- Total spending per veteran went from \$1,368 to \$2,773 – a **103% increase**.

America's veterans have provided invaluable service to our nation. There is no way to put a price tag on what they have done to protect our liberty and freedom. My own commitment to our veterans remains as firm as ever, and I will continue to seek ways to assure all veterans receive the benefits they have earned.



From Jim's Mailbag

Dear Congressman Kolbe,

I am very concerned about our growing federal deficit. Please let me know what you are doing to address this problem.

The federal budget and the economy are closely interrelated. The strength or weakness of the overall economy affects the levels of federal spending and receipts substantially. But, conversely, the budget has significant effects on the economy -- in terms of how fast the economy grows, the overall allocation of resources, the strength of our currency, and the willingness of foreigners to finance our deficits.

There is no doubt: Congress has to be a lot tougher, a lot bolder, if we are going to balance the budget, or even bring the deficit to a manageable size. According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the federal government had a total budget deficit of \$412 billion in 2004. That deficit represents a record level in dollar terms, but at 3.6 percent of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP), it would be smaller than the deficits of the mid-1980s and early 1990s relative to the size of the economy (during which time deficits frequently exceeded 4 percent of GDP). On January 26, 2005, the CBO projected that if current laws and policies remained the same, the federal government would run budget deficits of \$368 billion (3 percent of GDP) in 2005, \$295 billion in 2006, and that steadily declines until we will have a surplus of \$71 billion by 2012. Deficit projections seven years out are fairly meaningless, since no one can predict what programs Congress might enact affecting either spending or revenues. Thus, while some progress in reducing the deficit is being made, we need to keep the goal of achieving a balanced budget as quickly as possible; increased costs for the war on terror will continue to make this goal more challenging.

As Congress considers the federal budget for 2006, I believe we must do a lot more to reduce the budget deficit. I serve on the Appropriations Committee, which has jurisdiction over approximately one-third of federal spending, known as "discretionary" spending -- so called because the spending is determined year by year. The rest is "mandatory" spending and interest, which is outside of the annual Congressional appropriations process. These costs are fixed by the law which creates the programs. The 3 largest federal spending programs are mandatory: Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare. For example, spending on Social Security in 2004 was \$50 billion more than all non-defense discretionary spending combined. Clearly, the most challenging problems we have related to the federal budget are found in projected mandatory spending and its growth. At the current pace, spending for mandatory programs will grow 5.7 percent a year faster than the rate projected for the economy as a whole. I am committed to continue to work in Congress to address the federal budget so that our economy remains strong.

Sincerely,



*If you have a question or comment, log onto www.house.gov/kolbe.
Click on the "Contact Jim" link and simply fill out the form with your comments!*

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

August Town Halls are coming!

I look forward to meeting with residents throughout southeastern Arizona at a series of town halls in August. These town halls have always been important to me because they are my opportunity to hear directly from you. Your input, ideas, and concerns help me do my job of representing you in Congress. Check your mailbox at the end of July for a town hall card which will list specific dates and locations.